

---

**Early Learning & Human Services  
Committee**

---

**SSB 6419**

**Brief Description:** Concerning access to the Washington early childhood education and assistance program.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education (originally sponsored by Senators Rolfes, Zeiger, Billig, Wellman, Conway, Darneille, Kuderer, Palumbo and Walsh).

**Brief Summary of Substitute Bill**

- Allows up to 25 percent of the statewide enrollment in the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) to include children whose family incomes exceed program limits but who are homeless or experiencing other risk factors.
- Excludes children enrolled under the 25 percent allowance from the state-funded ECEAP entitlement.

**Hearing Date:** 2/15/18

**Staff:** Dawn Eychaner (786-7135).

**Background:**

The Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) is the state's voluntary preschool program for 3- and 4-year-olds. The ECEAP provides education, health and nutrition, and family support services.

ECEAP Eligibility.

Children are eligible for the state-supported ECEAP who are from families with incomes at or below 110 percent of the federal poverty level or who are eligible for special education due to a disability. Up to 10 percent of the total enrollment in the state-supported program may consist of children who are eligible based on other criteria adopted in rule by the Department of Early

---

*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

Learning (DEL). Rules adopted by the DEL include children as eligible who are returning to the same ECEAP contractor from the previous school year, receiving child protective services (CPS) or family assessment response (FAR) services, or who are impacted by specific developmental or environmental risk factors that are linked by research to school performance.

ECEAP Prioritization.

The DEL must prioritize enrollment for children from families with the lowest income, in foster care, or from families with multiple needs. Rules adopted by the DEL require ECEAP contractors to include as priority populations children who will be 4 years old by August 31 of the school year, are homeless, or are receiving CPS or FAR services.

When awarding ECEAP contracts, the DEL must prioritize programs located in low-income neighborhoods within high-need geographical areas. Within this priority, the DEL must give preference to programs offering extended-day programs, services to children diagnosed with a special need, or services to children involved in the child welfare system.

State funding for the ECEAP is phased in yearly, and children may be admitted to the extent the state provides funds for the program. Full statewide implementation is required by the 2022-23 school year, when any eligible child will be entitled to enroll in the state-supported ECEAP. Additional eligible children may be admitted to the ECEAP to the extent that grants and community sources provide sufficient funds for a program equivalent to that supported by state funds.

Other.

Effective July 1, 2018, all powers, functions, and duties of the DEL will be transferred to the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF).

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (McKinney-Vento) requires states and public school districts to ensure that children and youth experiencing homelessness have equal access to public education. The McKinney-Vento defines a homeless child or youth as one lacking a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.

**Summary of Bill:**

The DCYF must adopt rules to allow the inclusion of children in the ECEAP who have family incomes higher than 110 percent of the federal poverty level. These children must be either homeless, as defined by McKinney-Vento, or impacted by specific developmental or environmental risk factors that are linked by research to school performance.

The number of children included in the ECEAP under these eligibility criteria may be enrolled on a space available basis and may not exceed 25 percent of the total statewide ECEAP enrollment. These children are not considered eligible for the state-supported ECEAP and are not considered part of the state-funded entitlement.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect on July 1, 2018.